

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10

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R 261544Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 536

INFO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WASHDC

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 4531

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BL

SUBJ: T-37 AIRCRAFT--BOLIVIA

REF: SECDEF MSG 131401Z JUL 73

1. REQUEST RECONSIDERATION OF DECISION NOT TO SEND T-37 SURVEY TEAM TO BOLIVIA. ON JULY 18, TECHNICAL ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT BANZER ASKED COMUSMILGP CONCERNING ARRIVAL OF SURVEY TEAM AND REITERATED PRESIDENT'S GREAT INTEREST IN AUGMENTING TRAINING FLEET AT AIR ACADEMY SANTA CRUZ WITH T-37 JET.

2. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE BOLIVIAN AIR FORCE (BAF) WILL BE OCCUPIED ASSIMILATING CANADIAN T-33 AIRCRAFT FOR SOME TIME. HOWEVER, THE REQUIREMENT FOR T-37 AIRCRAFT IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM IS NOT NEGATED BY THE T-33 ENTRY INTO BAF INVENTORY. IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE THE T-33 WILL NOT BE USED AS A TRAINER, BUT RATHER AS A GROUND SUPPORT AIRCRAFT. THE LONG LEAD TIME, ESTIMATED AT 12 TO 18 MONTHS, TO PROPERLY PREPARE FACILITIES, MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICAL ASPECTS AND REVISE THE TRAINING PROGRAM AT THE AIR ACADEMY ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO RESULTS OF THE SURVEY. WITHOUT THE SURVEY, MODERNIZATION OF THE SCHOOL IS TYMIED AND WILL DIRECTLY IMPACT OVERALL BAF LONG-RANGE
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OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

3. THERE IS ANOTHER FACET TO DELAY OF SURVEY TEAM WHICH MAY NOT BE APPARENT. THIRD COUNTRY INFLUENCE (BRAZIL) AT THE SCHOOL IS GROWING, AS CAN BE SEEN IN THE BRAZILIAN RESIDENT ADVISORS AND AIRCRAFT "SOLD" OR GIVEN TO THE BAF. WHILE WE BELIEVE IT IS BENEFICIAL TO OUR OVERALL POLITICAL POSTURE TO SHARE SOME INFLUENCE HERE, WE DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO PLAY A SECONDARY ROLE TO THE BRAZILIANS IN ARMED FORCES CIRCLES. THE DEPARTMENT IS WELL AWARE OF BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE DISENCHANTMENT WITH USG UNRESPONSIVENESS IN SUPPLYING MODERN AIRCRAFT TO BRAZIL. WE EXPECT THEY WOULD PLAY SUCCESSFULLY ON THIS BIT OF HISTORY TO OUR DISADVANTAGE IF WE DRAG OUR FEET TOO LONG IN PREPARING THE GROUND FOR INTRODUCTION OF T-37 AIRCRAFT INTO BOLIVIA. IF U.S. IS TO CONTINUE AS PARAMOUNT FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN BAF, WE MUST DEMONSTRATE A CONTINUING, MEASURABLE INTEREST IN AIDING MODERNIZATION EFFORTS AT THE SCHOOL AND ELSEWHERE.

4. EMBASSY AGREES PRESENCE OF SURVEY TEAM WOULD IMPLY WILLINGNESS USG SELL T-37S TO BAF. IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO GET THIS MESSAGE ACROSS. AT SAME TIME APPROPRIATE U.S. MISSION COMPONENTS COULD USEFULLY REMIND GOB OF PROBLEMS WE MIGHT FACE IN FUTURE CONCERNING FMS CREDITS, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

5. CONSIDERING ALL ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION, STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT THE T-37 SURVEY TEAM BE SENT TO BOLIVIA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
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